

**Remarks**

In response to the rejections, the independent claims have been amended to specify receiving duplicate data from redundant paths, transmitted without awaiting an acknowledgement, and a hitless switch for realigning and selecting one of the duplicate data, and that the buffer acts to store a copy of the data which is only deleted when a write acknowledgement is received from the storage device.

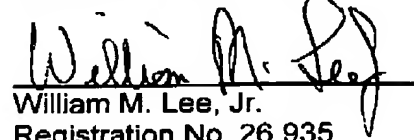
Thus the buffer can be seen as being used to bridge a transmission network having one type of protection (duplication and hitless switching) and a storage device having a different and incompatible type of protection (write acknowledge or retransmission request). The buffer enables the incompatibility to be overcome, without losing the protection advantages of both types, as will now be explained. By storing a copy until the write acknowledgement is received, it enables the retransmission without the delay involved in making the transmission wait for an acknowledgement of a preceding piece of data. By providing duplication and hitless switching, the transmission network can provide the reliability that makes it practical to continue transmitting without awaiting the acknowledgements. Hence the apparatus enables both types of protection to be used together without the delays of awaiting acknowledgements and without losing the reliability provided by the write acknowledgements from the storage device.

There is no disclosure of the claimed features in the cited references, nor in the technical class mentioned by the Examiner, so the independent claims are not anticipated. There is no suggestion or incentive in the cited references, nor in the technical class, leading a skilled person towards the invention, and so the claims cannot be obvious. The dependent claims are submitted to be allowable for the same reasons. Amendments have been made to some of the dependent claims for consistency with the amended main claims.

All the points raised have been addressed and favorable reconsideration is requested.

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William M. Lee, Jr.", is written over a horizontal line.

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